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கிருஸ்துவ மத பரிசீலனை

क्रस्चीन मत समीक्षण

ஆசிரியர் :— Author :

ஸ்ரீ பண்டித கங்காபிரசாத் உபாத்தியாய, எம்.ஏ.

Pandit Gangaprasad Upadyaya, M.A.

மொழி பெயர்ப் பாசிரியர். Translator :

பண்டித தர்மகாம்ஜி

Pandit Dharmakamji

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கிருஸ்தவ மத பரிசீலனை

கடவுளின் குமாரன்

கிருஸ்தவமதம் ஆரம்பித்து 1940 வருஷங்களாகின்றன. பாரதவர்ஷத்துக்கு, இந்த மதப்ரசாரகர்களில் இரண்டொருவர் முதல் நூற்றாண்டிலேயே வந்து விட்டார்கள். இவர்கள் முதலில் சென்னை மாகாணத்தில் நுழைந்தார்கள். முதலில் அவர்களுடைய எண்ணிக்கை விரல்களில் எண்ணும்படியாக யிருந்தது. அப்பொழுது இந்துக்கள் அவர்கள் விஷயமாக கவனம் செலுத்தவில்லை. அவர்களுடைய மதத்தையும் ஆராய்ச்சி செய்யவில்லை. இந்துக்களில் சிலர் கிருஸ்தவர்களாக மாறுவதையும் பார்த்துக்கொண்டே யிருந்தார்கள். இது அவர்கள் செய்த பெரிய தவறாகும். புதிய ஒரு விஷயத்தை அலக்ஷியம் செய்வது சரியல்ல. அதை பரீக்ஷிக்க வேண்டும்.

அவர்கள் பெருக ஆரம்பித்தார்கள். அவர்கள், பிரசாரத்தில் பல முறைகளைக் கையாண்டார்கள். இந்து தர்மத்துக்கு விரோதமாக புஸ்தகங்களை எழுதி அதிலுள்ள குற்றங்களைக் காண்பிக்க முயன்றார்கள். மேலும் சிறியதும் பெரியதுமான ஆயிரக்கணக்கான புத்தகங்கள் இந்து மதத்தை ஆராயும் முறையிலும், அம்மதத்தைவிட்டு ஜனங்களை கிருஸ்து மதத்தைத் தழுவுவதற்கு ஊக்கும் முறையிலும் எழுதப்பட்டுக் கொண்டிருந்தன.

இதன் பயனை இந்தியா முழுதும் கிருஸ்தவர்களுடைய எண்ணிக்கை அதிகரித்து வருகிறது. திருவாங்கூர் ராஜ்யத்தில் மாத்திரம் 51 லக்ஷம் ஜனங்களில் 16 லக்ஷம் ஜனங்கள் கிருஸ்தவர்களாக இருக்கின்றார்கள். கொச்சி ராஜ்யத்திலும் கிருஸ்தவர்களுடைய எண்ணிக்கை அதிகமாக இருக்கிறது. மற்ற மாகாணங்களிலும் அவர்கள் பெருத்து வருகிறார்கள்.

இங்கிலீஷில் இந்துக்கள் தம்முடைய மதத்தைவிட்டு எந்த மதத்தைக் கொள்ளப்போகின்றார்களோ அந்த கிருஸ்து மதத்தை ஆராய்ந்துப் பார்க்கவேண்டியது அவசியமாக யிருக்கிறது.

கிருஸ்து மதம், மற்ற மதங்களைவிடச் சிறந்ததாக யிருந்தால் எல்லோரும் கிருஸ்தவர்களாகலாம். ஆனால் அது மிகுந்த மயக்கப் பேச்சுகளால் நிறைந்திருக்கிறது, ஆகையால் நன்றாக யோசிக்காமல் தம்முடைய பாட்டன் தகப்பன்மார்களுடைய தர்மத்தைவிட்டு கிருஸ்துமத மென்னும் சேற்றில் சிக்கிக்கொண்டுத் திகைப்பது மடத்தனமாகும். எல்லாவற்றிற்கும் முதலில் இயேசு கிருஸ்து என்பவர் யார்? என்பதை கவனியுங்கள்.

ஏசுகிருஸ்து கடவுளின் குமாரனென்றும், அவர் விவாகமாகாத கன்னியான "மரியம்" என்பவளின் கர்ப்பத்திலிருந்து பிறந்தாரென்றும் கிருஸ்தவர்கள் சொல்லுகிறார்கள். இது அவர்களுடைய மூல சித்தாந்தம். ஏசுகிருஸ்துவை நல்ல மனிதர் என்று மட்டும் ஒத்துக்கொண்டு, அவர் கடவுளுடைய குமாரன் என்பதை ஒத்துக்கொள்ளாதவன் கிருஸ்தவனாக மாட்டான். அவர், மரியம் அம்மாளின் கர்ப்பத்திலிருந்து, அவளுக்குக் கல்யாணமாவதற்கு முன்பே

ஜனித்தார் என்பதை ஒத்துக்கொள்ளாதவர்களும் கிருஸ்தவர்களாக மதிக்கப்படமாட்டார்கள்.

அதாவது, ஏசுகிருஸ்துவானவர், விவாகமாகாத மரியம் என்று பெயருடைய ஒரு பெண்ணின் வயற்றிலிருந்து, அவள் எந்த புருஷனையும் சம்பந்தம் செய்துக்கொள்ளாதிருந்தும், ஜனித்தார். அதோடு அவர் கடவுளுடைய புத்திரனுவார். இந்த இரண்டு விஷயங்களும் கிருஸ்தவ மதத்தின் மூலாதாரமானக் கொள்கைகளாகும். இந்த இரண்டு விஷயங்களையும் நம்பாமல் யாரும் கிருஸ்துவராக முடியாது. இங்கு நாம் இந்த இரண்டு விஷயங்களையும் ஆராய்ச்சி செய்ய விரும்புகிறோம், எந்த பெண்ணையாவது புருஷ ஸம்பந்தமில்லாமல் குழந்தைப் பெறக்கூடுமா? இரண்டாவது, "கடவுளுடைய புத்திரன்" என்பதற்கு அபிப்ராயமென்ன?

மாதா பிதாக்களுடைய சம்பந்த மில்லாமல் யாரும் பிறக்க முடியாது என்று இயற்கைச் சட்டம் சொல்லுகிறது. ஆனுல் கிருஸ்தவர்கள், சரித்திரத்தின் ஆதாரமில்லாமலேயே ஏசுகிருஸ்து கல்யாணமாகாத கன்னிப் பெண்ணின் வயற்றிலிருந்து பிறந்தார் என்று நம்பிவிட்டார்கள்.

ஏசு கிருஸ்துவின் பிறப்பின் விஷயமாக "பைபளில்" எழுதியிருப்பதை, நாம் இங்கு எடுத்துக் காட்டுகிறோம்:—

"ஏசு இவ்விதமாக பிறந்தார். அவருடைய தாயான மரியம்மைக்கும், யூசுபுக்கும் கல்யாணப்பேச்சு நிச்சயமாயிற்று. அவ்விருவரும் கலப்பதற்கு முன்னமே அவள் பரிசுத்த ஆத்மா (ஆவி) வின் மூலமாக கர்ப்பவதியாகக் காணப்பட்டாள் (18).

அப்பொழுது அவளுடைய "யூசப்" என்னும் மதப்பற்றுள்ள பதியானவன் அவளுக்கு கெட்டபேர் கொடுக்க விரும்பாமல், அவளை விலக்கிவிடவேண்டுமென்று எண்ணினான். (19)

அவன் இவ்விஷயங்களை யோசித்துக்கொண்டிருக்கும்பொழுது, தேவனுடைய சுவர்க்க தூதன் அவனுக்கு ஸ்வப்பனத்தில் தென்பட்டுச் சொல்லத் தொடங்கினான். ஹே! தாவீதின் சந்ததியான யூசேப்! நீ உன்னுடைய மனைவியான மரியம்மாளை உன்னிடம் அழைத்து வருவதற்கு பயப்படாதே. ஏனெனில் அவளுடைய கர்ப்பத்தில் இருப்பது சிரேஷ்ட ஆத்மாவின் மூலமாக (உண்டாய்) இருக்கிறது. (20)

அவள் ஆண் பிள்ளையைப் பெறுவாள். நீ அவனுக்கு "இயேசு" என்று பெயர் சூட்டு. ஏனெனில், அவன் தன் மக்களை அவர்களுடைய பாவங்களிலிருந்து விடுவிப்பான். (21) (மத்தேயு 1, 18, 19, 20, 21)

இவைகளில் புத்திமான்கள் நம்பும்படியான பேச்சுகள் என்ன இருக்கின்றன? யூசேப் கனவு கண்ட விஷயமும் சரித்திர சம்பந்தமான உண்மை என்று சொல்லமுடியாது. ஜனங்கள் இவ்விதமான ஸ்வப்பனத்தைத் தினமும், காண்கிறார்கள், நீதி மன்றத்தில் இம்மாதிரியான வழக்கு வந்தால் இந்த ஸ்வப்பனத்தை ஆதாரமாகக்கொண்டு எந்த நீதிபதியாவது ஒரு முடிவுக்கு வரமுடியுமா? என்றும் முடியாது.

"மார்க்கு" எழுதின இஞ்ஜீலில் எழுதியிருக்கிறது:—
"And there came a voice from heaven, saying thou art my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased. அதாவது, ஆகாசத்தில் ஒரு ஒலி ஏற்பட்டு,

நீ என்னுடைய அன்புள்ள மகன். உனக்காக நான் மிகவும் களிப்படைகிறேன் என்று சொல்லிற்று." (மார்க, அத்தியாயம் 1, ஆயத் 11).

இந்தப்பிரயோகம், இயேசுவானவர், கடவுளின் மகன் என்பதை உறுதி செய்யவில்லை. ஆகாயத்தில் ஒலித்தது என்பதும் ஆதாரமற்ற பேச்சு, அதற்கு ஆதாரமுமில்லை. இக்காலத்திலும் பல ஆகாயவாணிக் காரர்கள் (Ventrilo-cution) அலைந்து கொண்டிருக்கிறார்கள். அவர்களுடைய சத்தத்தை, கடவுளுடைய சத்தமென்று யாரும் சொல்வதில்லை. இங்கு மற்றொரு விஷயத்தையும் கவனிக்கவேண்டும். அந்த ஆகாயவாணியைக் கேட்டது யார்? எப்பொழுது கேட்டார்? இவைகளுக்கெல்லாம் ஆதாரம் கிடைப்பது கடினம். "மார்கஸ்" அல்லது மாற்க் என்பவர் அச்சமயத்தில் இருக்கவில்லை. அவர் சொல்லுவார் பேச்சைக் கேட்டு எழுதிவிட்டார். இப்படிப்பட்ட பேச்சை எப்படி நம்புவது? புத்திமான் என்றும் சத்தியவான் என்றும் ஜனங்களால் புகழ்பெற்ற ஒரு கனவான் இந்த சம்பவத்தை உண்மையென்று ரூபித்துக் காட்ட முடியுமா? அப்படியில்லாத வரையில், இந்தப் பேச்சுகளை நம்புகிறவர்கள் புத்திசாலிகளென்று அழைக்கப்படமாட்டார்கள். இதே மாதிரி, லூகஸ் எழுதின இஞ்ஜீலின் முதல் அத்யாயத்தில் "ஒரு (பரிஸ்தா) தேவதூதன் வந்தான். புருஷனிடம் சேராமலேயே உனக்கு ஒரு பிள்ளை உண்டாவான் என்றும் அவன் உலகத்தையே சீர்திருத்துவான் என்றும் மரியம்மைக்குச் சொன்னான்" என்று எழுதியிருக்கிறது. இங்கும் தேவதூதன் வந்ததற்கும், மரியம்மையிடம் சொன்னதற்கும் ஆதாரமில்லை. இதெல்லாம் யாராவது கட்டிவிட்டப் பேச்

சாரும் தேவதூதன் என்பது யார்? கடவுள் அவனை ஏன் அனுப்புகிறார்? எங்கிருந்து அனுப்புகிறார்? இது முதலாவது விஷயம். இரண்டாவதாக, லூக்கஸும் இவைகளை எல்லாம் யாரோ சொன்னதைக் கேட்டுதான் எழுதிருக்கிறார். அவர் தானாகக் கண்ணால் பார்த்ததும் காதால் கேட்டதுமில்லை. ஜிப்ராயில் தேவதூதன் மரியம்மையிடம் சொல்லும்போது அருகிலிருந்து நம்பிக்கையுள்ள எந்த மனிதனும் அந்தப் பேச்சுகளைக் கேட்கவுமில்லை என்று இஞ்ஜீலினால் தெரிய வருகிறது. லூக்கா, மத்தேயு இவ்விருவர்களுடைய பேச்சுகளில் வித்தியாச மேன் காணப்படுகிறது? யோசேப்பு கனவு கண்டதாக மத்தேயு வர்ணிக்கிறார். தேவதூதன் மரியம்மையிடம் வந்ததாக லூக்கா எழுதுகிறார். எதை நம்புவது? எதைத் தள்ளுவது? இன்று உங்களிடம் எவனாவது வந்து "நான் இவ்விதமாக கனவு கண்டேன்" என்றோ அல்லது எவளாவது தன்னிடம் தேவதூதர்கள் வந்துப் பேசினதாகவோ வர்ணித்தால் நீங்கள் அதை நம்புவீர்களா?

இது கிருஸ்தவர்களின் வியப்பைத் தரும் வெகுளித்தனமாகும். ஒரு ஆங்கில எழுத்தாளர் சொல்லும் உண்மையைக் கேளுங்கள்,—

If in the creed there are two clauses more than any others that ought to be expunged, assuredly there are 'was conceived by the Holy Ghost' and "Born of the Virgin Mary" It is scarcely possible without irreverence, and happily it is not necessary to state in plain language what the inevitable implica-

tions of these clauses are to those who accept them in their literalness, as so many people do" (West Way's Science & Theology P. 370)

இவர்களுடைய நம்பிக்கைக் கடிதத்திலிருந்து எவைகளாவது இரண்டு வாக்கியங்கள் எடுத்துவிடுவதற்கு, மற்றவைகளைவிட அதிகத் தகுதியானவைகளாக இருக்கின்றன என்றால் அவைகள் "பரிசுத்த ஆவியினால் கர்ப்பவதியானாள்" "புருஷச் சேர்க்கையின்றி மகவை யீன்றாள்" என்னும் இந்த இரண்டு வாக்கியங்களேயாம். ஏனெனில், இவ்வாக்கியங்களிலுள்ள ஒவ்வொரு எழுத்தையும் உண்மையென்று நம்புகிறவர்களுக்கு, இவ்விரண்டு வாக்கியங்களின் முழு அர்த்தத்தையும் விளக்கிச் சொல்லவேண்டுமானால் போக்கிரித்தனமாக பேசுகிறவர்களாக ஆகாமல் அப்படிச் செய்ய முடியாது.

நாமும் இங்கு இதைவிட அதிகமாக எதுவும் சொல்ல விரும்பவில்லை. "கடவுளின் குமாரன்" என்பதற்கு அர்த்தமென்ன ? இது இரண்டாவது கேள்வி.

ஒருவிதத்தில் பார்க்கப்போனால் உலகத்திலுள்ள எல்லா பிராணிகளும் ஈசனின் குமாரர்களே யாவார்கள் ஏனெனில் ஈசுவரன் எல்லோரையும் படைக்கிறார், காப்பாற்றுகிறார். இதில் மனிதர், பசு, பக்ஷி என்னும் பேதமில்லை. ஆனால் கிருஸ்தவர்கள் இந்த அர்த்தத்தில் இயேசுவைக் கடவுள் குமாரன் என்பதில்லை. அவர்கள் ஏசுகிருஸ்துவைக் கடவுளின் ஒற்றைப்பிள்ளை என்கிறார்கள். இந்த வார்த்தைக்கு என்ன அபிப்ராயம் என்று எந்த கிருஸ்தவரும் சொல்லுவதில்லை. மகன் என்பதற்கு சாதாரண அர்த்தம் எல்லோருக்கும் தெரியும்.

ஒருவனுடைய சரீர சம்பந்தத்தினால் பிறந்த மகனை அந்நியனுடைய மகனென்று யாரும் சொல்லமாட்டார்கள் பரமேசுவரனோ சரீரமுள்ளவரல்ல. இப்படியிருக்க, மரியம்மைக் கடவுளுடைய மனைவியாகவும், மரியம்மையின் புத்திரனைக் கடவுளுடைய புத்திரனாக நம்புவதும் எப்படிப் பொருந்தும்? எல்லா புருஷர்களும் பகவானுடைய புத்திரர்களென்றால் எல்லா பெண்களும் கடவுளுடைய புத்திரிகளாவார்கள். இந்த அர்த்தத்தில் மரியம்மையும் கடவுளுடைய புத்திரியாவாள். பிறகு மரியம்மையின் பிள்ளையான இயேசு, ஈசுவரனின் "ஒற்றைப்பிள்ளை" யாக எப்படி ஆனார்?

ஏசுகிருஸ்துவின் சரீரம், கடவுளுடைய குமாரனா அல்லது ஏசுகிருஸ்துவின் ஆத்மா கடவுளின் குமாரனா? என்பது இரண்டாவது கேள்வியாகும்.

இயேசுவைக் கடவுள் உண்டாக்கினதால் இயேசுவினுடைய ஆத்மாவே கடவுளுடைய குமாரனாகும் என்று சொன்னால், இந்த அர்த்தத்தில் அவருடைய மதத்தின்படி எல்லா ஆத்மாக்களும் கடவுளுடைய குமாரர்களே யாவார்கள். இதில் தனிச்சிறப்பு என்ன? இயேசு தன்னுடைய சரீரத்துடன் கடவுளுடைய புத்திரனாக ஆனார் என்றால், அவர் இறந்துவிட்ட பிறகு அவர் கடவுளுடைய புத்திரரா. அல்லவா? ஏனெனில் மரணத்துக்குப் பிறகு அந்த சரீரம் இங்கு அழிந்தல்லவா போய்விட்டது? ஏசுவானவர் கன்னிப் பெண்ணின் கர்ப்பத்திலிருந்து பிறந்ததால் கடவுளின் புத்திரனாகிறார் என்றால் இதற்குச் சரியான அத்தாட்சி கிடையாது ஏனெனில் கன்னியின் வயிற்றிலிருந்து பிறந்த தென்பது அசம்பவமான பேச்சாகும். இது எந்த அறிவாளியும் ஒத்துக்கொள்ள முடியாத அவ்வளவு நிர்பலமான கொள்கையாகும். இந்த விஷயத்தை ஆராயப்போனால் கிருஸ்தவர்கள் வருத்தப்படுகிறார்கள். நமது பெரியோர்களுக்கு அவமானம் செய்யப்படுகிறது என்கிறார்கள். ஆனால் "இப்படிப்பட்ட அசங்கதமான கொள்கையை நாம் ஏன்

நம்புகிறோமென்றும் மற்றவர்களையும் அதை ஒத்துக்கொள்ளும்படி ஏன் தூண்டி "விடுகிறோமென்றும்" அவர்கள் யோசிப்பதில்லை. இயேசு கிறிஸ்து, தச்சனை யூசேப்பின் மகனென்றும், உலகத்தில் தாய் தந்தையர்களுடைய சம்பந்தத்தினால், சிறியவர்களும் பெரியவர்களுமான பல மனிதர்கள் பிறப்பதுபோலவே அவரும் பிறந்தாரென்றும் நேராக ஏன் ஒத்துக்கொள்ளக் கூடாது?

பைபிளிலும், ஏசு, யூசேப் தச்சனுடைய மகன் என்று எழுதியிருக்கிறது. அவருடைய தாயான ஸ்ரீமதி மரியம்மம்மாளுடன் யூசேபுக்குக் கல்யாணப்பேச்சு நிச்சயமாய் விட்டிருந்தது. இதுதான் அறிவுக்கு எட்டுகிறது. கன்னியின் வயற்றிலிருந்து பிறந்ததால் அவர் கடவுள் புத்திரனெனப் படுகிறார். என்பது விநோதமான பேச்சாகும். இதுவும் ஒரு யுக்தியாகுமா?

தாய் தந்தையர்களுடைய சேர்க்கையானது பாவத்தைக் குறிப்பிடுவதால், ஏசுவினுடைய பிறப்பை பாவமற்ற முறையில் கொண்டாடுவதற்காக இந்த விதி தேவையாகிறது, என்று சொன்னால் அதுவும் சரியல்ல. புருஷன், மனைவி இவர்களுடையதும் யோகத்தினாலேயே பிரஜா விருத்தியாக வேண்டும் என்று கடவுளே நியமம் ஏற்படுத்தியிருப்பதால், இதைப் பாவமென்பது தகாது. பெற்றோர்களுடைய சேர்க்கையில் பிறந்த பெரிய மனிதர்களெல்லாம் பாவத்தினால் உண்டானவர்களென்பதே உங்களுடைய அபிப்ராயமா? எந்த பாதிரியாவது இதை ஒத்துக்கொள்வாரா?

ஏசுவின் உற்பத்தி விஷயமாக ஜனங்களுக்கு ஆச்சர்யம் உண்டாக்கவேண்டி இப்படி சொல்லப்பட்டது என்றாலும் சரியாகாது. இதிலென்ன விசித்ர குணம் இருக்கிறது?

தனக்காக ஒரு பிள்ளையை விசித்திரமான முறையில் உண்டாக்கிக் கொள்ளவேண்டுமென்று கடவுள் விரும்பினால் தாயும் தகப்பனும் தேவையில்லாமலேயே ஏற்பாடு செய்து விடுவார். தாயும், தந்தையும் இல்லாமலேயே “ஆதம்” உண்டானார் என்று கிருஸ்துவர்கள் நம்புகிறார்கள். அவர் கடவுளுக்கு ஒற்றைப் பிள்ளையல்லவா? அவரையும் ஒற்றைப்பிள்ளையாக ஒப்புக்கொண்டால் இரண்டு ஒற்றைப்பிள்ளைகள் ஆய்விடுகிறார்கள். இப்படிப்பட்ட கதைகளெல்லாம் கிருஸ்துவர்களுக்குத்தான் தெரிகிறது. புருஷ சம்பந்தமின்றி குழந்தை பிறக்கும் கொள்கையானது, பொய்யானதும் உற்பத்தி க்ரமத்துக்கு விரோதமானதும், சந்தேகத்தை உண்டாக்கக் கூடியதும், முற்றிலும் ஆதாரமற்றதும், ஒத்துக்கொள்ள முடியாததுமாகும். ஏசுவின் உற்பத்தி ரகஸ்யமானது, அதை வெளிப்படுத்த முடியாது என்று சொல்லுகிறார்கள். அப்படியானால் இந்துமதம் முதலிய மற்ற மதங்களின் ரகஸ்யங்களை ஏன் கண்டிக்கிறீர்கள்? ஸ்ரீ கிருஷ்ணன் மலையை சுண்டுவிரலில் தாங்கினார் எப்படி? இயேசு கிறிஸ்து, கலியாணமாகாத பெண்ணிற்கு பிள்ளையாகப் பிறந்தது போலதான்’ அனுமான் சூரியனை கௌவிக்கொண்டாரா! எப்படி? இயேசுகிருஸ்துவின் பிறவியின் விஷயத்தில் ரகசியமிருப்பதுபோல இதிலும் இருக்கிறது. இதே விதமாக எந்தப் பழைய பேச்சுகளையும், அசம்பவமான வதந்திகளையும் ரகஸ்யமென்று சொல்லிவிடலாம்.

ஆதாமும் ஏவாளும், சைத்தானின் தூண்டுதலால், ஞானவிருக்ஷத்தின் பழத்தைத் தின்று கடவுளின் கட்டளையை அவமதித்தார்கள். இதே பாவம்தான் மனிதர்களைப் பற்றிக்கொண்டு வருகிறது. இந்த பாவத்திலிருந்து

தப்பித்துக் கொள்வதற்காகத்தான் இயேசுகிருஸ்து பாவமற்ற முறையில் உண்டாக்கப்பட்டார். ஏனெனில் ஏசுவை, யூசேப்பின் பிள்ளையென்று ஒத்துக்கொண்டால், ஆதாமனின் வம்சத்தவனான யூசேப்பின் சரீரத்திலும் ஆதாமனின் பாவத்தினுடைய அம்சம் இருப்பதனால், அது இயேசுவையும் பற்றிக்கொள்ளும் என்பது சில கிருஸ்தவர்களுடைய அபிப்ராயமாகும். இந்த விஷயத்தில் கிருஸ்தவர்கள் தவறான எண்ணம் கொண்டுவிட்டார்கள். யூசேப்பின் பாவம் இயேசுவைப் பற்றிக்கொள்ளுமென்றால், மரியம்மையின் பாவம் கிருஸ்துவை ஏன் பிடித்துக்கொள்ளாது? அந்தம்மாளும், ஆதாம், ஏவாள். இவ்விருவர்களுடைய சந்ததிதானே? மரியம்மையின் பாவம் இயேசு கிருஸ்துவையும் பிடித்துக்கொண்டுவிட்ட தென்பதில் இப்பொழுது சந்தேகமில்லை. தகப்பனுடைய பாவத்தில் பிள்ளைக்குப் பங்கு வரும், தாயினுடைய பாவத்தில் பிள்ளைக்குப் பங்கு இல்லை என்பது எந்த ஊர் நியாயம்? ஆதாம், ஏவாள் இவ்விருவர்களின் பாவத்தில் பெண்களுக்குப் பங்கில்லை என்று யார் சொல்லுவார்கள்.

இவ்விதமே, ஏசுவை கழுவில் ஏற்றிவிட்ட பிறகு, மூன்றாம் நாள் உயிர்பெற்று எழுந்தார். இறந்த பிறகு மூன்றாம் நாள் உயிர்பெற்று எழுந்தார் என்பதை ஒத்துக்கொள்ளாதவர்கள் கிருஸ்தவர்களாக முடியாது, கிருஸ்தவர்களாவதற்கு இந்தக் கொள்கையை அவசியம் நம்பியாக வேண்டும்; கழுவேற்றப்பட்ட பிறகு இயேசு இறந்து விட்டாரா இல்லையா? இறந்து விட்டிருந்தால், அவருடைய ஆத்மா சரீரத்தைவிட்டுப் போயிருக்கும். சரீரத்தைவிட்டு ஆத்மாவானது முற்றிலும் வெளிவந்து விடுவதற்குத்தான்

மரணம் என்று பெயர். கழுமரத்தில் அவர் இறந்து விட்டிருந்தால், அவருடைய சவத்தில் உயிர் இருந்திருக்காது: மரணத்தின் பிறகு உடனே பிணம் அழுக ஆரம்பிப்பதால், மூன்றாம்நாள் அது எப்படி எழுந்து வந்திருக்க முடியும்? அந்த ஆத்மா மறுபடியும் திரும்பி வந்து சவத்தை எழும்படி செய்தது என்றால் மறு பிறவி ஏற்பட்டது என்று எண்ண வேண்டும். கிருஸ்தவர்களோ மறு பிறவியை ஒத்துக்கொள்வதில்லை. கழுவில் ஏற்றினபோது, ஏசுவினுடைய ஆத்மா சரீரத்தை விட்டு முற்றிலும் சென்று விடவில்லை என்றும், மூர்ச்சை உண்டாய் விட்டதென்றும் சொன்னால் அது சரியே, ஆனால் இதில் என்ன விசேஷம், அல்லது விசித்திரம் தானென்ன? உலகத்தில் அநேக மனிதர்கள் பலநாள் வரை மூர்ச்சையிலிருந்து பிறகு எழுந்திருப்பதைக் காண்கிறோம். இது வெகு சாதாரணமான விஷயம். இதையே கிருஸ்தவர்கள் மிகப் பெரியதாகக் காட்டி உலகத்தை மயக்கத்தில் போடுகிறார்கள்.

கிருஸ்துமதத்திற்கு ஆதாரமான மற்றொரு விஷயமும் நாம் அறிந்துக்கொள்ள முடியவில்லை. இயேசுவானவர் எல்லோருடைய பாவங்களுக்கு பதிலாக கழுவேறினார், அவரை நம்புகிறவர்கள் பாவங்களிலிருந்து விடுபட்டு மோக்ஷமடைவார்கள் என்று சொல்லப்படுகிறது. இதுவும் மக்களை ஏமாற்றும் பேச்சாகும். அவரவர்களுடைய வினைப்பயன்களை அவரவர்கள் அனுபவிப்பார்கள். ஒருவன் செய்த வினையின் பயனை மற்றொருவன் எப்படி அனுபவிக்க முடியும்? அப்படி முடியுமானால் கடவுளுடைய நியாயம் சரி தப்பிவிடும். கடவுள், தம்முடைய ஒற்றைப் பிள்ளையை, மக்களின் பாவங்களையெல்லாம் விலக்குவதற்காகவே உலகத்

துக்கு அனுப்பினார் என்றால், இந்த ஒற்றைப்பிள்ளையை சிருஷ்டியின் ஆதியிலேயே ஏன் அனுப்பவில்லை? இயேசு வருவதற்குமுன் லக்ஷக்கணக்கான வருஷங்களாக கோடிக் கணக்கான ஜனங்கள் வாழ்ந்துகொண்டும் இறந்துகொண்டு மிருந்தார்களே! அவர்கள் பாவமும் செய்திருப்பார்களே! இயேசுவின் மரணத்தினால் அவர்களுடைய பாவங்கள் எவ்விதம் நிவர்த்தியாயிருக்கக்கூடும்! இயேசுவுக்கு முன் காலத்திலிருந்த, பின் காலத்திலிருக்கின்ற, எல்லா மனிதர்களுடைய பாவங்களும், அவர் கழுவேறினதால் நீங்கிவிட்டன, என்றால் இப்பொழுது, இயேசுவை நம்புகிறவர்கள், நம்பாதவர்கள், என்னும் வித்தியாசமின்றி யாரும் பாவம் செய்யலாம். எவ்வளவு அதிகமாக வேண்டுமானாலும் செய்யலாம். அப்படி எவ்வளவு பாவங்கள் செய்தாலும் பாவம் பற்றாது; தண்டனையும் கிடைக்காது, என்றுதான் அர்த்தமாகிறது. இயேசுவானவர் நமது பாவங்களையெல்லாம் ஏற்று பிராயச்சித்தம் செய்துகொண்டு விட்டாரென்றால், பிறகு அவரை நம்பி இப்பொழுது நமக்கென்ன லாபம்? இயேசுவை நம்பாததும் ஒரு பாவந்தானே. மனிதர்களுடைய எல்லா பாவங்களுக்காகவும் கழுவேறினவருக்கு, அவரை நம்பாததால் ஏற்பட்ட பாவம், தீர்க்க முடியாத அவ்வளவு பெரியதா? எல்லோருடைய பாவங்களையும் தம்முடைய தலையில் சுமந்துச் செல்லுவதற்காகவே ஏசுகிருஸ்து வந்தாரென்றால், அப்படிப்பட்டவர், "என்னை நம்பாதவர்களை நரகத்தில் தள்ளுவேன், நம்புகிறவர்களை சுவர்க்கத்துக்கு அனுப்புவேன்" என்று சொல்லி தனக்கு பெரும் புகழும் உண்டாக வேண்டுமென்று அவ்வளவு பிரயாசை ஏன் படுகிறார்? உண்மையில், இயேசுவானவர் கழுவிலேறி மனிதர்களுடைய

பாவங்களை யெல்லாம் நிவர்த்தி செய்து விட்டாரென்று சொல்வது ஏமாற்றமாகும். யோசிக்கும் திறமையற்ற ஜனங்களைக் கெடுப்பதாகும்.

இயேசுவின்மேல் நம்பிக்கை வைப்பதால் மட்டும் சுவர்க்கம் கிடைத்து விடாது; நற்காரியங்களையும் செய்ய வேண்டும் என்றால் கிறிஸ்துவ மதத்தில் விசேஷமென்ன இருக்கிறது? வைதிக தர்மத்தினர்களும், நற்காரியங்களைச் செய்வதால் மோக்ஷம் கிடைப்பதாகச் சொல்லுகிறார்கள்.

கெட்டகாரியங்களைச் செய்பவர்களுக்கு இயேசு கிறிஸ்துவும் உதவி செய்ய முடியாது, மற்ற எவரும் உதவ முடியாது. விஷயம் இப்படியிருக்க, நாம் நமது மதத்தைவிட்டு கிறிஸ்தவர்களாக ஏன் மாறவேண்டும்? இயேசுவைக் கடவுளுடைய பிள்ளையென்று ஏன் துதி செய்கிறார்கள்? நம்முடைய சிறந்த வைதிக மதத்தைவிட்டு, கிறிஸ்துமதம் புகுவதற்கு அதில் என்ன சிறப்பு இருக்கிறது? ஏதுவுமில்லை. உண்மையில் வைதிக மதத்தில், ஈஸ்வரன், ஜீவன் இவர்களுடைய ஸ்வரூபத்தையும், மோக்ஷத்திற்கான [illegible]ங்களையும் எவ்வளவு விவரமாகவும், அழகாகவும் [illegible]டிருக்கிறதோ அவ்வளவு வேறெந்த மதத்திலும் [illegible]க்காது. ஜனங்கள் சத்ய, சனாதன, வைதிக, தருமத்தை [illegible]றிந்து நடக்கவேண்டும். பொய் வார்த்தைகளை யெல[illegible] விட்டொழிக்கவேண்டும்.

———

ஆரிய சமாஜ தமிழ்ச் சிறு நூற் பிரசுரங்கள்.

பண்டித கங்காபிரசாத் உபாத்தியாய, எம்.எ., அவர்களின்
மொழிபெயர்ப்பு நூல்கள்

		ரூ.	அ.	பை.
ராமபக்தி ரகஸ்யம் (ஆரிய நீதி கோத்து)	1.	0	0	6
கலியுகமும் இந்துக்களும்	2.	0	0	6
கடவுளும் பூஜையும்	3.	0	0	6
நமது குழந்தைகளின் கல்வி	4.	0	0	6
நமது தர்ம சாஸ்திரம்	5.	0	0	6
புராதன ஆரிய வர்த்தம்	6.	0	0	6
அரசனும் குடிகளும்	7.	0	0	6
நமது தர்மம்	8.	0	0	6
இல்ல(ற)த்தின் தேவி	9.	0	0	6
நமது தேச சேவை	10.	0	0	6
நமது பிரிக்கப்பட்ட சகோதரர்கள்	11.	0	0	6
நமது கட்டுப்பாடு (ஒற்றுமை)	12.	0	0	6
நமது உண்மையான வார்த்தைகள்	13.	0	0	6
தேவீ தேவதா	14.	0	0	6
நீங்கள் யார்	15.	0	0	6
உங்களுடைய தர்மம் (மதம்) என்ன ?	16.	0	..	6
உங்களுடைய மொழி எது ?	17.	0	0	6

Arya Samaj English Pubicatior

(By Pandit Gangaprasad Upadyaya, M.A.

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ஆர்ய சமாஜம், 170, சைனாபஜார், செல்

[No. 1[illegible]]

WAS JESUS GOD?

HOW DID HE COME TO BE WORSHIPPED AS GOD?

BY

REV. J. T. SUNDERLAND.

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Association shall be to diffuse the
ledge and promote the interests of
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shall be invited to unite and co-o
with it for that purpose."

*(The General Conference of Unita
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the following vote at Saratoga, N.
in 1891.)*

"These Churches accept the relig
Jesus holding, in accordance wit
teaching, that practical religion is s
up in love to God and love to man.'

"The Conference recognizes th
that its constituency is Congregati
tradition and polity. Therefore, it d
that nothing in this Constitution i
construed as an authoritative test;
cordially invite to our working fell
any who, while differing from us in
are in general sympathy with our
and our practical aims."

WAS JESUS GOD?

HOW CAME HE TO BE WORSHIPPED?

Jesus of Nazareth, a *man* approved of God, among you. — SAINT PETER.

To us there is but one God, the Father. — SAINT PAUL.

I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and unto my God and your God. — JESUS.

Jesus Christ belonged to the true race of prophets. One man was true to what is in you and me. He saw that God incarnates himself in man, and evermore goes forth anew to take possession of his world. He said, in this jubilee of sublime emotion: "I am divine. Through me God acts; through me, speaks. Would you see God, see me; or see thee, when thou also thinkest as I now think." The understanding caught this high chant from the poet's lips, and said in the next age: "This was Jehovah come down out of heaven. I will kill you if you say he was a man." The idioms of his language and the figures of his rhetoric have usurped the place of his truth; and churches are not built on his principles, but on his tropes. Christianity becomes a Mythus, as the poetic teaching of Greece and of Egypt before. — EMERSON.

I INVITE you to a consideration — I hope it will be a very candid consideration — of the questions, Was Jesus God? and, How did he come to be worshipped as God?

The impression seems to be quite common that to regard Jesus as not God, but as a man, is to degrade and dishonor him.

I think, on the contrary, that it is to lift him into truer and really greater honor. For — did you never think of it? — a God pinched and compressed into the limit of our finite humanity becomes thereby of necessity a very meagre and small God. Jesus, born as a babe, and in a few years dying; during his boyhood growing in knowledge as you and I do; after he was a man sometimes

disappointed; trying to accomplish ends, and again and again failing because of opposition; declaring that there were some things that he did not know,—furnishes a picture of a God so meagre, so inadequate, so like the little gods that the heathen believe in, that we instinctively push it aside, and demand for our worship something simply infinitely higher and larger, lifted wholly out of the category of this finiteness.

Jesus as a *man* commands the honor and homage of all the world. None can look upon him without feeling the beauty, the greatness, the essential divineness of his life. But clothe him in the garments of deity, and how quickly does his greatness disappear! You have put upon him robes a thousand times too large for any possible finite being. Thus, however good your intention, you really but mock him. How much greater is the honor done him by pushing aside all this childish folly, this ecclesiastical and theological fiction of the ages, and letting him stand up in the strength and winning grace of his incomparable manhood!

But not only do we most honor Jesus by accepting him as just what he claimed to be, a brother man to all of us, but I think that thus also we bring him closer to our humanity, and make him far more helpful to us all as an example, as a guide, as an inspirer in life, than he can possibly be when thought of as a deity. How can a deity be an example to us? We are not deities. God cannot sin; how, then, can God's example of sinlessness help us in our sin? God cannot be tempted; how, then, can his example in resisting the tempter help us in our temptation? But a *man*, who has been tempted as we are, who has suffered as we suffer, and yet who has overcome, and out of it all has risen up into obedience and purity and peace,—such a one can be an example and an inspiration to all men.

"Since he is mortal, even as am I,
And yet so God-like, may not I control
My earthly nature, and lift up my soul
To Christ's, our perfect standard, if I try?

"I hold that he stands nearer to all men,
And fills a higher and more useful place,
Than when he wore a supernatural grace, —
What man has done, that man may do again."

So, then, I think that not only loyalty to truth, but also reverence toward Jesus and desire to make his life practically serviceable to men, unite to urge the importance of the inquiry which we have before us.

In endeavoring to find an answer to our question, Was Jesus God? I shall interrogate: (1) Reason, or Common Sense; (2) The Bible; (3) History, Secular and Church; and (4) I shall endeavor to find the *real origin* of the *idea* that Jesus was God.

1. First, then, what does calm, unbiassed reason have to say upon this subject, judging on general principles and from the nature of the case?

If we could only strip ourselves of our conventional habits of thought and the influence of early education, I apprehend we should require but a very short time to arrive at a conclusion. Familiarity with an idea has great power to blind us to its strangeness, its absurdity, its inherent incredibility. Many an idea which, could it come to our minds freshly and for the first time, would seem unworthy even of consideration, may be carried in a mind which has become familiar with it from childhood without a perception at all of its irrational and essentially absurd character.

So I ween it is with this idea of the infinite and eternal God, who inhabits all worlds and holds all power in his hands, "whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain," coming to this little world of ours, being born as

a babe, living in a human body for thirty-three years or so, and dying upon a cross. Surely it would seem as if the very statement of the idea would, to any rational mind, carry its own refutation.

And it does carry its own refutation, instantly, whenever we see it in any form in which we can judge of it without bias; as, for example, when we see essentially the same thing in connection with other religions, outside of our own.

Go back to the days of the old Roman Empire, and you find the Roman people declaring their emperors to be gods, and worshipping them. What do you do? You turn away, pronouncing it superstition and folly.

Go among the various peoples of central and eastern Asia, where Buddhism prevails, and you find men there to-day worshipping Buddha as God, just as Orthodox Christians worship Jesus.

Go among the Brahmans of India, and they will tell you that God has been incarnate in the world, but it was in their Hindu Krishna.

Go to Thibet, and there you will be told that every one of their Grand Llamas is a special incarnation of God.

Do you believe these people? Certainly not. Yet they all present to you what seems to them strong evidence for what they affirm. To you it seems no evidence at all. Now turn round and present to them your reasons for your belief that Jesus was God, and it will seem to them no evidence at all. Yet you accept it. What is the explanation? This: each has been educated from childhood into his own belief, and so he does not see the absurdity of it. But when he comes to see the very same thing in a different dress and under other circumstances, its unreasonableness at once comes to view.

It is worth our while to ask ourselves this question: If so astonishing an event did really happen on our earth

nineteen hundred years ago as the special and personal residence here for thirty or forty years of the infinite and eternal God,—an event, if true, the most astonishing that it is possible to conceive; an event beside which the lives and careers of an Alexander, a Caesar, a Mahomet, a Charlemagne, a Napoleon, and a Washington, all combined, are as nothing,—I say, if such an event actually did occur, how does it happen that so little comparatively has come of it?

Grant that Christianity has resulted; yet Christianity, even when it has had eighteen hundred years of time given it in which to grow and expand, is not yet the predominant religion of the world. Buddhism has a still more numerous following, while two or three other religions are not very far behind. Now, to say the least, this would seem a marvel, that the religion which the infinite God himself had come down and lived on earth a third of a century on purpose to found should still, after almost two thousand years, be second in number of adherents to Buddhism, founded by a mere man, and not very greatly in advance of Mohammedanism, founded also by a man.

But, furthermore, as we inquire into this matter of the coming of God to live and die as a human being upon the earth, we discover that quite as strange a part of it as anything was the object that he is said to have had in view in thus coming. When people tell us that the Almighty did thus come to our world, what object do they say he had in so doing? They tell us that his object was to save the human race from perdition in an eternal hell. Well, has he saved the race from that nell? How large a proportion of the race has his coming resulted in saving?

Our Orthodox friends, with their theological views, find themselves obliged to make the proportion very

small, — possibly one-fiftieth part of all who have lived on the earth from the creation up to this time, or possibly one-tenth; I suppose few would put the proportion higher than one-tenth. But, now, this is all very strange. You can hardly call an effort a success which succeeds in accomplishing only one-tenth of what it aimed to accomplish. So, then, the Almighty was not successful. Thus it would seem. I do not see how to escape the conclusion. Moreover, it seems a very singular proceeding, to say the least, that a God of infinite power and wisdom and love should have *created* an eternal hell, should have decreed that every being who sinned should go there, and then deliberately should have peopled the earth with a race of beings whom he knew would sin. Nor does it seem any less singular or unreasonable when we are told that to try to remedy matters he afterwards came himself to the earth as a human being, and suffered and died, and as a result succeeded in saving, say, *one in ten* of the race.

No, friends, look at it how we will, the idea that the infinite, eternal, and all-wise God, who made the heavens and the earth, "in whom there is no variableness nor shadow of turning," has at some time come to our world and assumed a special human body, in the person of the great Teacher of Nazareth or of any other human being, for the purpose of saving the race from some supposed perdition, or for any other purpose, need only to be candidly and fairly looked at, as it seems to me at least, to appear to the very last degree unreasonable. It is one of those things which we can but marvel should be believed by any intelligent person, and which would not be believed by any intelligent person except for the fact that people are taught it when they are children, too young to perceive how utterly irrational it is.

II. I proceed now, in the second place, to interrogate

the *Bible*, and see what *it* has to teach. I cannot, of course, touch all the arguments or all the scripture passages supposed to bear upon this subject. I shall try, however, to pass by nothing that is vital to the question at issue.

Let us look first for a moment at the Old Testament. It is claimed that there are Old Testament predictions of Jesus which prove that he was God; but scholarship is more and more showing that these claims are without foundation. By far the most clear and weighty of these so-called predictions is that found in Isaiah ix. 6. It reads in our Common Version: "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace."

Concerning this passage two things are to be observed. First, there is no reason whatever to believe that the prophet had Jesus in mind in uttering it, but much reason to believe the contrary. Second, the highest scholarship shows that our English version gives a faulty translation of the Hebrew, and that a correct translation makes the passage descriptive, not of an incarnate deity, but simply of a human king. The words in the passage which seem to indicate deity are "Mighty God" and "Everlasting Father;" but the best scholars, even in Orthodox ranks, leave these words out, and give us others in their place which refer plainly to a man. Instead of "Mighty God," Dr. Briggs gives us as the correct translation "divine hero," and instead of "Everlasting Father," "distributer of spoils." President Harper gives us as the true renderings "a god of a hero," or "a very great hero," and "distributer of spoils." Professor Robertson Smith, of England, agrees with these renderings, as do the greatest European scholars, such as Dr.

Kuenen. Says Robertson Smith, "Isaiah's ideal is only the perfect performance of the ordinary duties of monarchy." Thus fades away the passage which is by far the strongest quoted from the Old Testament in support of the deity of Jesus.

Let us come now to the New Testament. It is sometimes claimed that Jesus must have been God because of the stories of his miraculous birth found in the opening chapters of Matthew and Luke. Is this claim well founded? I reply: First, even if we grant that these miraculous birth stories are historically true, they do not prove the deity of Jesus. They show that his nature was extraordinary, and perhaps superhuman, but they do not take him out of the realm of the created and the finite. They carry no necessary implication that he was the uncreated and omnipotent God, but rather the opposite.

Secondly, and still more important, these birth stories bear evidence of being legendary, not historic. They are found only in Matthew and Luke; they are not found in Mark, which is almost certainly the oldest Gospel. This fact is suspicious. It suggests for them a probably late origin, after the completion of Mark. Quite as suspicious, too, is the fact that Jesus himself never refers to any such miraculous birth; and nobody during his lifetime seems to have known anything of it. If God, and not man, was his father, and if his birth was heralded by angels and attended by miraculous presences, why were his brothers and relatives so long in believing on him? Even his own mother seems not to have known of the story that he had no human father, for she represents Joseph as his father. When the twelve-year-old boy is lost in the Temple, and Mary and Joseph find him, she says to Jesus, "Thy father Joseph and I have sought thee sorrowing."

These miraculous birth stories seem to be simply a legendary accretion that gathered about the history of Jesus long after his death, and subsequent, as I have said, to the compilation of the Gospel of Mark. The Gospels were slow in coming into existence. For a long time there were no written records of the great teacher. As time passed away, and his impressive figure faded into the distance of years, one and another of his followers wrote down what they could remember of his words and deeds. Then began the process of gathering together these precious *memorabilia*. We get traces of various compilings and editings, the final results of which were our Gospels, Mark, Matthew, and Luke. But forty, sixty, eighty years had elapsed. It is not strange that by this time a legendary element should have crept in.

Legends have grown up around nearly all other great men of the past, especially great religious leaders, — as Buddha, Zoroaster, Mahomet, and Moses. Why should they not around Jesus? Especially is there a tendency to associate the miraculous with the *birth* of the great. Buddha was born of a virgin; so was Fo-hi, the ancient founder of the Chinese Paradise. Zoroaster was miraculously conceived. Romulus, the founder of Rome, was son of the god Mars. Alexander the Great had a human mother, but his father was the god Jupiter. Cæsar was called the son of the goddess Venus. There is nothing strange, therefore, that similar legends of a miraculous birth should have attached themselves to Jesus, or that some of them should have crept into the accounts of him that have come down to us. But can any one fail to see that such stories no more prove the deity of Jesus than they do the deity of Cæsar, or Alexander, or Zoroaster, or Buddha?

Turning now from the legendary to the historic parts

of the Gospels, what do we find there regarding the question before us?

Grant, for the sake of argument, — though I do not grant this in fact, — that there are two, or three, or four, or even six passages in the biographies of Jesus which seem, on the face of them and isolated from their settings, to teach that he was God. Shall we let them outweigh the fact, no more to be evaded than the sun at midday is to be evaded, that the entire New Testament, from beginning to end, in every discourse and every act of Jesus, in the whole story of his life, and in every exposition of Christian doctrine made by the apostles, declares, or else necessarily implies, that Jesus was inferior to God, and was not himself God? If Jesus had been God, and had been known to be such by the writers of the biographies we have of him, we should expect the fact, so transcendent in its importance, to have been made clear and unmistakable everywhere from first to last, and not to rest for proof upon, to say the most, half a dozen passages, every one of them, moreover, capable of being interpreted in such a way as to lose all value as proof.

It will certainly be a marvellous thing if Abraham Lincoln shall go down to coming ages having no clear evidence of the fact that he was President of the United States during the War of the Rebellion, coupled with his name in the histories of his life and time that shall be preserved. Yet this would not be a hundredth part so marvellous or so unaccountable as that the supreme God of the universe should incarnate himself in Jesus of Nazareth, or in any other human being, and dwell on the earth thirty-three years on purpose to make himself and his salvation known to men, and then should allow the histories of the time and the biographies of the man in whom he had incarnated himself to be so written as to

convey to future ages no clear indication of what he had done, — indeed, to be so written as to convince a large proportion of the ablest scholars and most intelligent minds of the world that no such special incarnation had ever taken place.

But let us look carefully at the biographies and see just how they do represent Jesus.

The narratives of the life of Jesus that we possess are four in number, — Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Of these the first three, called the Synoptic Gospels, are regarded by almost all the reliable critics as much more certainly authentic than the Fourth. Indeed, a large number of the most eminent biblical scholars have long entertained grave doubts as to whether the Fourth Gospel came from the pen of John, or any disciple; and many go as far as to affirm that the evidence is irresistible that it did not.

Now, Jesus in the first three, — the most authentic of the Gospels, — certainly never *says* that he *is God;* but, on the contrary, he does over and over again say what is at least equivalent to the declaration that he is *not God.*

Even going forward and adding the Fourth Gospel, it is essentially the same. So far as I know, there are only two passages purporting to come from the lips of Jesus even in this Gospel which are ever quoted in proof of his supreme deity. One of these is, "I and my Father are one." But this he sufficiently explains when he afterwards prays for his disciples that "they may be one even as we are." Certainly we can find no proof that Jesus was God in a passage which simply says that he and God are one in the same sense in which he prays that his disciples may be one.

The other passage sometimes quoted from this Gospel in proof that Jesus represented himself as God is, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." But does this

teach that Jesus is God? Surely not; for, mark, it teaches that if Jesus is God at all, he is God *the Father*. But not even our stanchest Trinitarian friends hold that Jesus was God *the Father*. The passage evidently intends to teach that in Jesus was seen, in a certain spiritual sense, the image, or likeness, or representation, of God's nature and character, just as it is a very common thing for us all to say of a boy, "If you have seen him, you have seen his father," or of a family of children, "If you have seen one, you have seen all." Precisely thus those who had seen Jesus had seen God, his Father and ours, shining out as it were through him, in his love, his purity, his truth, all the beauty and excellency and divineness of his character. Hence the deep and beautiful significance of his saying, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

These two passages, I say, are the only passages in all the Gospels which, so far as I know, are ever quoted as declarations by Jesus himself of his supreme deity; and yet neither of them, as we see when we come to look carefully, teaches anything of the kind. Whereas the declarations from the lips of Jesus to the effect that he was not God are numerous in all four of the Gospels. Among them are such passages as these: "My Father is greater than I," "I can of mine own self do nothing," "The words which I speak unto you, I speak not of myself, but the Father that dwelleth in me [as he dwells in all his human children] he doeth the works," "My meat is to do the will [not of myself, but] of *him that sent* me," "Of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." Can God say of himself that there are some things which he does not know? "Why callest thou *me* good? There is none good *but one*, that is *God*." Could God have said that? "I ascend unto my Father

and your Father, to *my God* and your God." Could God have said that?

We see, too, that Jesus constantly prays to another as God, teaches his disciples to pray to that other and not to himself, and nowhere does he teach or intimate that he is a being to whom any one is to pray, now or in any coming time. Surely this is all very marvellous, if he was *deity!*

Nor is this all. When a youth, we find him spoken of as "increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men." But can God increase in wisdom? Can it be said of God that he increases in favor with himself? When the young prophet sets out upon his public lifework, we find one of his first experiences represented as being that of a long and very severe temptation: the devil tempts him by offering him, among other things, all the kingdoms of this world. But can God be tempted? Especially can he be tempted by the devil with an offer of the petty kingdoms of this world when all worlds are already his own? We find Jesus always mingling with men as himself a man. He suffers as others suffer. He weeps as others weep. He is disappointed as others are disappointed, —as, for example, when he comes to the fig-tree expecting to find figs, and finds none. But can God be disappointed? Jesus has his hours of discouragement and gloom as other men have. For example, on the cross he exclaims in agony, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" But can God be discouraged? Can God forsake himself? If Jesus had been God, would not such language have been mere pretence? Nay, would it not have been out and out deception?

Is it said that at least the miracles of Jesus prove him to have been God? I reply, the Bible represents man as working miracles. Elijah and Elisha go so far as even to raise the dead.

No, friends, whatever else Jesus may have claimed, if the Synoptic Gospels are true, he did not claim to be God. Nor do the Gospels make such a claim for him. Everywhere in their pages he is portrayed as a man, a brother of all other men, and a child of the infinite Father, as all other men are.

It is plain, too, that the disciples of Jesus did not believe him to be God. For note: if he really was the Almighty Jehovah, and if his disciples really regarded him as such, there must have been some particular time when they first found out this startling and stupendous fact. And when they found it out, it must have produced in them, one and all, feelings of the most overwhelming amazement and awe; and from that hour their conduct toward him must have been utterly changed, and they must have shown in every act and word their feeling of humility and homage in his presence.

But as we examine the accounts that have been handed down to us, what do we find? Any record of such a discovery made by them at any time? None. Any sign of such changed conduct toward Jesus? None whatever. They all continue to treat him to the end with the familiarity of a fellow-man, and give no intimation that they even dream that he is other than human. At one time Peter took occasion to rebuke Jesus. Does this look as if then he thought him God, the Almighty? In the Garden of Gethsemane all the disciples forsook Jesus and fled. Does this indicate that they had yet found out that he was the Supreme Jehovah? During the trial of Jesus, Peter denied him. Would he have done so if he had thought him omnipotent? He would not have denied Cæsar at Rome. How, then, could he have denied one whom he believed to be more powerful than a thousand Cæsars? At the sepulchre the disciples wept, disconsolate, believing that their leader's cause

had failed, and that all their hopes were blighted. This surely shows they had not yet found out that he was God. When, then, did they find it out?

Was it after the resurrection? There is no record or sign of its occurring then. On the contrary, the accounts represent the disciples as continuing their former familiar manner of intercourse with Jesus up to the very morning of the ascension. Indeed, their conversation with him on that very morning does not differ at all in character from those of earlier times. Nor is there any sign even on the Day of Pentecost that they had yet made the stupendous discovery. If at that time they had been possessed of this astounding knowledge, do you think it would have been possible for Peter so to hide it and so to dissimulate before the people as to have coolly begun his sermon on that great occasion, "Jesus of Nazareth, a *man* approved of God among you, by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him"? Nor is there any account or indication of this knowledge ever coming to them at all.

Now, is such an amazing omission for one moment credible? Could we not more easily account for the omission from the Gospels of anything else whatever than the omission of the record or announcement of an event which, if true, was beyond comparison the most important in the world's whole history?

Let us now leave the Gospels and pass to the Acts and Epistles, and see if here we can discover any evidence that the apostles believed Jesus to have been God. What do we find in these books? We find still Christ spoken of as a created and subordinate being. True, he is often referred to in very exalted terms. It is plain that as the years went by he became lifted up in the minds of his followers to a great height, and surrounded with a very splendid halo of idealization. Evidently the

exceedingly mystical Logos doctrine of the time had come to some extent into the minds of some of them, — at least the author of the Fourth Gospel, — and the general philosophical and religious thought of the age, which was mystical, and which tended to wipe out the line between the human and the superhuman, between men and gods, — evidently all had had its effect in causing the apostles to portray Jesus, certainly not as God, but sometimes as a being whom we, with our sober, scientific, less imaginative, less dreamy, more clear-thinking minds find some difficulty in putting always in the category of the human. But this is as far as we can go. This said, all is said. To claim these occasionally idealized and more or less mystical representations of Jesus as proof that he was God, or that the apostles thought he was God, would be utterly unwarrantable, as will be seen clearly by simply referring to a few of the large number of declarations which are not entangled in any mysticism, but which are clear, clean-cut, unmistakable. "Him hath *God* ordained," "him hath *God* set forth," "him hath *God* raised up," is the constant burden of apostolic teaching. God was over him, guiding him, inspiring him, helping him, giving him wisdom and power. This is the constant representation. How many times do the apostles designate the Almighty as the *God* as well as the *Father* of Jesus Christ! Saint Paul says, "There is one God, and one mediator between God and man, the *man* Christ Jesus." Saint John says, "God loved us and sent his son to be a propitiation,' etc. How misleading are such words as these, if that son was himself God! What deception am I guilty of if I say, "I sent my son," meaning I went myself!

That old passage in 1 John, "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one," — a passage which far

more than any other has been the corner-stone of the doctrine of the Trinity,—is now universally cast out as spurious, there being no longer even a shadow of a reason for believing it to be genuine. Every respectable scholar now omits it. If you will look at the Revised Version of the New Testament, made a few years ago by a committee of scholars of all Protestant denominations, you will find there the passage left out as spurious.

Perhaps nothing in all the writings of the apostles has more light to throw upon the question of the deity of Jesus than the Epistle of James. I wish you would read it with this question in view. James, the writer of this epistle, was probably the brother of Jesus, son of the same parents, brought up in the same home. Surely he, if anybody, then, knew if Jesus was God. But read the epistle, and you will not find the slightest intimation of any such thing. Now, how are you going to account for this? If Jesus had been God, do you think his own brother would not have known it, or would not have thought it a thing of enough moment to be worth mentioning? Do you think he would fill his epistle full of other things, and not mention or hint the fact of most importance in all the history of the world? You see it is simply incredible.

This, then, in brief, is the testimony which the New Testament has for us bearing upon the question, Was Jesus God?

And now let me ask in all candor, Is it proof? Does it begin to be proof? Does it even show that any of the New Testament writers *thought* that Jesus was God? If it did that, still that would not be certain proof that he was; for we know how easy it is for people to be mistaken even nowadays. How much more easy was it in a credulous, uncritical age like that in which Jesus appeared! We are told in the Acts that the people of

Lystra thought *Paul* was a god. Yet none of *us* think he was. So that I say, even if the New Testament writers had *supposed* Jesus to be a deity, and had so recorded, still that would be only slight proof that he was such. What, then, shall we say when we find, as we have found, that the New Testament writers, as a whole, teach nothing of the kind, but the opposite. No one of them, with the possible exception of the author of the Fourth Gospel, who has to be thrown out of the account in a discussion of this kind, because we do not know who he was, and because he wrote his Gospel almost certainly as late as near the middle of the second century, after the work of deifying Jesus had begun, — I say, not a single New Testament writer, with this one possible exception, seems even to have dreamed of Jesus being the Almighty God. His neighbors all speak of him and treat him as a man; his parents and brothers and sisters do the same; his disciples do the same. It is plain that the idea of his being a deity was the invention of a later time. How and when and why it arose we shall see presently.

III. Leaving now our interrogation of the Bible upon the subject before us, shall we next turn for a very few moments to *History*.

There are two different and distinct branches of history which have testimony to give, negative or positive, with regard to this question which we are studying.

The first is *Sacred* or *Church* History. Did the early Christian Church regard Jesus as God?

In reply to this inquiry I unhesitatingly answer, No. The evidence is clear that the early Christian Church was Unitarian. The doctrine of the Trinity — including, of course, the doctrine of the deity of Christ — came into being, as is well known, in the second, third, and fourth centuries, having had its origin unquestionably in the

speculative and exceedingly mystical neoplatonism of Alexandria. A theological battle arose over it, which raged throughout Christendom, tearing in pieces the Greek and Latin Churches in the most terrible manner, and awakening everywhere alienation and hatred where before had been comparative peace and harmony. The Council of Nicæa, which established the Trinitarian doctrine as orthodox and to be henceforth the faith of the Church, for a long time hung in doubtful balance over it. And when at last the council decided in favor of the doctrine, the real influence which turned the scale seems to have been the Emperor Constantine, a man who shaped all his course and conduct by what he thought policy, having several different times in his life changed back and forth between Unitarianism and Trinitarianism. And so but for the influence of the crafty emperor, who happened at that moment to be training with the Trinitarian party, Unitarianism, the prevailing belief of the Church up to that time, — including, of course, this doctrine of the non-deity of Jesus, — would doubtless have been the prevailing belief of Christendom to-day instead of Trinitarianism with its doctrine of the deity of Jesus.

So much, then, for our interrogation of Church History. Let us turn now for a moment's look outside of the Christian Church, and see whether the *Secular* or *Profane* History (so called) of those early times has any light to throw upon the question before us.

To revert to a thought which I have already slightly touched, it really would seem incredible that the Creator of the Universe should have come into human form and dwelt for a term of years upon this earth without its being known at least to the age in which the event occurred. Very well, then; *did* the age of Jesus have any sort of *suspicion* even that in Palestine there was an event of such stupendous magnitude transpiring? That

whole age is well covered by numerous and reliable histories. The most important political and social events occurring within the bounds of the Roman Empire are preserved to us in detail. As to Palestine, the country in which the occurrence under consideration is said to have taken place, it was a country lying far inside the boundary lines of the empire. Men well known at Rome and among the great men of the time had for a considerable term of years been its governors. Greek learning had for three centuries flowed freely through it. Certainly the Jews themselves must have been familiar with the notable events going on within its borders. What, then, do we find in the annals of the time regarding an event so much more astonishing than anything in the history of Rome or Athens, or than anything that had gone before it in the history of Palestine? Surely we shall find the histories of the Greeks and of the Romans, and especially of the Jews of the time, crowded with it, giving everything else a secondary place in comparison.

But when we turn to the histories of the age, what do we find? Three Roman writers — Tacitus, Pliny the younger, and Suetonius — mention Jesus, thus proving that there was such a person, and that he originated the Christian movement. But that is all. Not the slightest intimation is given that there was reason to believe him to be the eternal God, or that he was anything else but a man.

Turning to Jewish historians and writers of the time, we find Jesus mentioned in very derogatory ways in the Talmud, by those who were evidently his bitter enemies; and also we find him somewhat favorably mentioned in two short passages by the eminent historian, Josephus. One of these passages is probably wholly spurious, and the other partly so; and yet, even if we accept them both as fully genuine, they give no intimation that the

historian, Jesus' own countryman, and born only two years after the Crucifixion, believed the teacher of Nazareth to be God.

And these are absolutely *all* the mentions which history, outside of the Bible, makes of Jesus, — Roman history, Greek history, or Jewish history.

So, then, we have reached very quickly the answer to our question as to whether the age of Jesus knew anything about the Almighty and Eternal God dwelling incarnate in its midst.

No, history drives us to affirm either that Jesus was not God, or else that an event, as I have already said, incomparably more startling in its character and more towering in its grandeur and significance than any other in the history of mankind took place absolutely in a corner, — unknown to the world, unknown to the nation among whom it occurred, unknown to anybody except a little company of a dozen obscure men, and, as I think I have shown the overwhelming evidence to be, unknown to a single one of them.

So much, then, for the testimony of *History* as to whether the contemporaries of Jesus believed him to be God.

I said in the beginning of my lecture that I should interrogate first, Reason; second, the Bible; third, History, — to see what answer each would make to our question. I have now finished the inquiry in each of these three directions.

Only one thing more remains for me to do, — namely, to attempt to throw a little light, if I may, upon the question of how it was that men came to suppose Jesus to be divine. Where did the idea of God's incarnation in him come from? We can hardly believe that such an idea could of itself and independently have leaped into existence in the minds of so large a part of the Christian

Church! there must at least be an explanation; there must have been a producing cause. Can we discover them?

I think we shall be able easily to find an explanation and a cause, which at the same time will be an additional argument in proof that the supposed deity of Jesus was only a speculation or superstition, and not a reality. But let us see.

I have already called attention to the fact that the ideas of gods incarnating themselves in human forms and of men becoming gods, are not new ideas in the world. On the contrary, the oriental world from the earliest times has been full of such ideas, floating nebulously in the minds of men. Indeed, there was hardly one of the oriental nations existing at the time of Jesus, but had its legends and popular beliefs of one or more of the gods coming down at some time or other and assuming the form of a man, and dwelling on earth.

Rawlinson in his Herodotus tells us that the Egyptians believed that their god Osiris had incarnated himself in human form and dwelt among them.

The Chinese have the popular belief that Lao-tse existed from all eternity, but descended to earth, was born of a virgin, lived a human life, and when his work of beneficence among men was done, ascended up bodily into heaven.

Brahmanism is full of the incarnation idea. Vishnu is believed to have been incarnated nine times.

I have spoken of the belief among the Buddhists that Buddha was an incarnation of God, and the belief in Thibet that the Grand Llamas or Pope Emperors of that country are all incarnations of God in human form.

In the Greek and Roman world, too, in the midst of which Christianity had its birth and early development, we find essentially the same thought everywhere. The

minds of the people were full of belief in gods whose forms were those of men; and also of men deified, or raised up to the condition of gods. The founders of Rome were deified and worshipped as gods. All the Roman emperors for a long period of time were raised to divine honors. Suetonius tells us that the people fully believed in the divinity of Julius Cæsar. Marcus Aurelius was still worshipped in the time of Diocletian. Antinous was adored in Egypt a century after his death. From Cæsar to Constantine sixty persons in all were deified. Constantine was doubly deified; he was apotheosized by the pagans and canonized by Christians, and coins were stamped having on them a monogram signifying Jesus, Mary, Constantine; all three seemingly being put on a level as equally divine.

Here, then, we have a picture of the thought of the age—and of the religious beliefs of the age—in which Jesus appeared, and in which Christianity began its career in the world.

Thus we see that the incarnation idea was not something unknown, something that can be accounted for only by supposing that God did actually come to earth and dwell in human form in Jesus. On the contrary, it was a common idea, entertained among many peoples, and in many forms, familiar at the time of the rise of Christianity to everybody in the Roman world. What is more natural than that in such an age Jesus too should have been lifted up to divine honors, as well as so many others? An age that could deify Grecian lawgivers and Roman emperors, why should it not deify Jesus? An age that could believe in incarnations of gods in animal forms (as in the sacred bull of Egypt), and in human forms (as in Buddha, Lao-tse, Osiris, and Krishna),—what more natural than that such an age, as time went on and the real human Jesus faded into the background,

should, little by little, speculate itself into the notion that he too was an incarnation of God.

Moreover we must not forget that the Christians who were converts from Judaism, from the very first identified Jesus with the being whom the Jews expected would come as their Messiah. But the popular notion of the Messiah was that he was going to be a man who in some way would possess supernatural power, — a king who would set up an earthly and yet a supernatural kingdom. Right here, then, in this attempt of his earthly followers to make him fulfil the vague, speculative, and supernaturalistic messianic idea, we have the first step toward making Jesus a god.

Then came surging in upon this all the Gnostic and Neoplatonic and oriental philosophical speculation of the time, full of these ideas of incarnations which I have been describing. And finally the Christians were brought into contact all the while with a government which raised its emperors into objects of worship. Where, then, is there anything strange in the thought that the Christians should have soon come to think of their master also as a divine being—a god incarnated in human form — or a man by his purity of life and suffering elevated to be a god?

Surely nothing could have been more natural. All religious doctrines are more or less the outgrowth of their age. What doctrine concerning Jesus and God could have been more exactly and perfectly the child of the age in which Christianity had its origin and early history, than this doctrine that Jesus was God? And such a doctrine once distinctly formulated and incorporated into the creeds of the church, of course would stoutly and long hold its place against no matter how much of new light. And so we have this doctrine as a part of all the confessions and creeds of so-called Orthodox Christendom to-day.

But enough. I have now answered as well as a single discourse will allow, the questions with which I set out — Was Jesus God? And, How did he come to be worshipped?

Just a word more in closing.

Are there any here who say to me that in undertaking, as I have done this evening, to show that Jesus was a man and not God, I am dishonoring Jesus, and tearing down the time-honored religious belief of a large part of the Christian world?

To the first of these charges, I can only reply again as in the beginning of my discourse: No, I deny that it dishonors Jesus — rather do I affirm that it lifts him up into the truest honor — to insist on his humanity, and to refuse to wrap the garments of a fictitious deity about him. As God he is petty, insignificant, pitiful. But as a man, words are too poor to express the grandeur and greatness of his nature. As a deity, he fades away into a shadowy myth. As a man, he is the most real, living, and influential character in history, — the topmost, finest flower on the tree of our great humanity.

As to the second charge, that I am tearing down that which to many is a cherished belief, I reply: Yes, in a sense I am, just as I should be tearing down a belief which many cherish if I urged that Buddha or the Virgin Mary are not proper objects of worship. But is there no justification? Is truth not to be spoken unless all men assent to it? I simply tear down a great, hurtful superstition, that grew up in a dark and credulous age, and has ever since cast its shadow across the face of God, robbing him of his honor, hiding him from sight, and dividing Christendom into warring sects.

The real work that Jesus did in his day was to reveal God, — to reveal him more clearly than any other great religious teacher or prophet had ever done. Alas, that

men in their superstitious and mistaken zeal should have lifted him into the place of God — the creature into the place of the Creator — the one who taught men to pray to his Father and ours, up to the throne of the universe, himself to be prayed to; thus making of him instead of a revealer of God, a concealer, a usurper of God's place! Do we shrink from worshipping idols? How then can we consent to take a created being, no matter if he be the pure, wise, noble Jesus, and raising him aloft in our imaginations, bow down in worship before him, instead of bowing in worship always and only before the God above him and above us all, up to whom he never failed humbly and earnestly to point his followers?

No, friends, I do not touch thoughtlessly or rashly any religious belief held sincerely by any human being. I do not pull down except to build better. I only say to men, "Do not worship Jesus," in order that I may the more emphatically and earnestly say, "Worship him whom Jesus worshipped, and taught men everywhere to join with him in worshipping, as our common Father in Heaven."

Tenderly let us love Jesus; sincerely let us honor him; gladly and gratefully let us sit at his feet, to learn wisdom from his gracious lips and his matchless life. But let us not follow in the path of the ancient pagan peoples and deify the man we would honor, even if that man be the great and incomparable Galilean. Rather let us be his so true and faithful disciples, that, in all worship, we shall be pointed by him ever to *his Father and our Father, to his God and our God!*

Words are inadequate to paint the evil results that have come to religion and the world from the deification of Jesus. It was this that brought into the Christian Church the reign of creeds and dogmas which for so many centuries has blighted Christianity, and which, alas!

is far from over yet. So long as Jesus remained a man, the aim of his followers was to love him and follow him in deeds of helpfulness and mercy. When he became a god, all minds turned to the task of framing right theories about him; and woe to any who dared to think differently from the opinion of the majority. Thus Christianity became changed from love to belief, from conduct to speculation, from a life to a theology, — with the inevitable consequences of divisions, strifes, heresies, endless multiplication of sects, hatreds, religious wars, persecutions, untold bloodshed.

When will these evils pass away? Never, until their cause is removed. Jesus the god has always been, not only a usurper of his father's throne, but a sower of seed of endless speculation, contention, and strife among men. But Jesus the man — the man whose teaching and life were love and helpfulness — has always been an influence in the world for love and peace. And so in the nature of the case it must always be.

It is plain then that the salvation of Christianity lies in going back from the deified Christ of the creeds and the theologies to the loving, living human Jesus of the Gospels.

It is hopeful that already in many quarters the cry is being raised, Back to Jesus! the *real* Jesus of the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord's Prayer, the Golden Rule, the two great Commandments, and the incomparable Parables! And well may this cry be heard, because this means back from fiction to truth, back from mythology to reality, back from creed to deed, back from speculation to love, back from division and strife to unity and peace.

And such a going back as this means *going forward,* — forward to such an *advance as Christianity has never known.*

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